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ABSTRACT

A participatory model of public relations proposed by Dean Kruckeberg and Kenneth Starck would seek not to serve a public but to build a sense of community. In this model the advocacy focus of the publicity model is dropped and there is a movement toward relationships rather than selling products and services. Leaving behind the journalistic approach of publicity, public relations professionals do more interpersonal and public communication where persuasion includes argumentation within an ethical construct. Because of the shift away from the publicity model, public relations has been growing as a discipline in communication departments rather than in journalism departments. With the recent explosion of public relations curricula, communication departments have moved to the participatory model where intra/interpersonal and public communication (persuasion-argumentation) serve as the training for future public relations professionals. The newer participatory model must reflect international and multicultural changes in the world. An international perspective modifies the key concept in public relations teaching such as "ethics" and the use of "communication approaches." Likewise, accreditation bodies need to incorporate recent data on public relations training and development and change program and individual accreditation standards to meet present needs. Research, awards, professional and academic associations, and public relations codes of ethics should reflect multicultural dimensions. (One diagram is included; 13 references are attached.) (SG)

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MASS COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC COMMUNICATION, AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: A GLOBAL MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

MASS COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC COMMUNICATION, AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:

A GLOBAL MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations is practiced primarily as a publicity model advocating products and services. This journalistically oriented publicity model is essentially a one-way or unbalanced communication with a strong emphasis on targeting public. Competition rather than cooperation is stressed.

A participatory model is proposed by Kruckeberg and Starck. Here the goal is not to serve a public but to build a sense of community. Advocacy is dropped and there is a movement toward relationships rather then selling products and services. Leaving behind the journalistic approach of publicity, public relations professionals do more interpersonal and public communication where persuasion includes argumentation within an ethical construct.

Because of the shift from away from the publicity model, public relations has been growing as a discipline in communication departments rather than journalism departments. With the recent explosion of public relations curriculum, communication departments have moved away from the publicity model to more of the participatory model where intra/interpersonal and public communication (persuasion-argumentation) serve as the training for future public relations professionals.

This two-way balanced communication is not only explicated by persuasion-argumentation but also by the understanding concept put forth by Grunig and the synergistic (intra/interpersonal approach) designed by Neff. Whereas the former approach has been well-developed over hundreds of years the latter approaches have been introduced only recently. Generally those trained in journalism and not the communication perspective have failed to understand the full background of persuasion which includes argumentation (logos) and ethics (ethos). Thus persuasion-argumentation, too, belongs to the symetrical, two-way form of communication.

The shift from publicity to a participatory model is not enough, however. With the major political and economic changes, the newer participatory model must reflect the international and multicultural changes in the world. An international perspective modifies the key concepts in public relations teaching such as "ethics" and the use of "communication approaches." Likewise the accreditation bodies need to incorporate the most recent data on public relations training and development and change program and individual accreditation standards to meet present needs. Research and awards should include the multicultural guidelines. Both the professional and academic associations should be closely affiliated with multicultural organizations such as Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research (SIETAR). Lastly, the public relations codes of ethics should reflect multicultural dimensions.

MASS COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC COMMUNICATION, AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:

A GLOBAL MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations as a more formalized program of study emerged initially from the academic environment of journalism. But more recently communication departments have led in public relations curriculum development and find the expanded professional roles involving primarily nonjournalistic responsibilities are now more communication oriented activities (Neff, 1990). Fund raising, counseling, and communication management are a few types of the newer professional responsibilities which demand more relational than journalistic types of skills. The newer public relations functions fit easily into a communication curriculum which has persuasion, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and public communication. There is no other discipline which offers the communication base demanded by the newer public relations responsibilities.

Perhaps most important is the emergence of public relations curriculum in communication departments during a period where international and multicultural concerns are in the forefront of public relations efforts. Basically the international perspective is the next major impact on public relations education and the inevitable focus of public relations in the 1990's.

The purpose of this discussion is 1) to redefine public relations in light of the new perspectives and roles assumed by professionals, 2) to explore the implications of the global impact on public relations education, and 3) to recommend modifications and new directions for present practices, training, and standards governing the public relations discipline.

Redefining Public Relations

The journalism based public relations programs remain essentially a publicity model with an emphasis on products and services. A publicity model focuses on "public". The professional, often an account executive, is servicing a public. The focus on products and services is an advocacy approach and often considered a one-way or unbalanced communication flow. By using the publicity models, publics are targeted with little opportunity for feedback.

A balanced two-way flow of communication would represent the participatory or relational model. Moving from a publicity model to a participatory model is fully described by Kruckeberg and Starck in their book on Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory. Here the authors establish the goal of public relations as not serving public but in building a sense of community.

> "Public relations early adopted--and has continued to apply--the transmission model of communication, that is, principles rooted in . . . advocacy rather than principles based on social involvement and participation."

The authors further stated that:

> The "communcal" or "communitarian" stresses

> it was able to bring together the family and society aspects of community because of its belief that social evolution was moving in the direction of greater physical and spiritual unity, a movement that would require no loss of personal forms of community as it forged the Great Community. (Kruckeberg and Starck, 1988, 62)

One concept supporting the participatory model of public relations comes from persuasion, a long-established discipline within the communication field of study. Often persuasion is not fully understood by those coming from a journalism oriented discipline and is consequently misplaced under the one-way mode of communication. Persuasion-argumentation practiced in its full spectrum emphasizing both ethics (ethos) and logic (logos) fits the participatory or relational model in a number of ways and is an integral part of public and organizational communication.

A newer and less developed concept is that of "understanding" promoted by James Grunig. If the understanding concept is cast into arenas where bargaining, negotiating, and court decisions are made, then understanding has a official role in many situations.

Another recent approach to the participatory model is through the concept of syngergy which is based on intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. Here understanding is not as important as is utilizing communication languaging to create possibilities. Different from persuasion-argumentation in that logic or reason is not a necessary component to the communication process. The why or wherefore of issues is not the critical emphasis. Neff proposes the synergistic approach based on creativity as a relational or participatory emphasis.

The three approaches persuasion-argumentation, understanding, and synergy contribute a new richness to public relations study. These approaches will assist public relations to meet the challenges in a variety of multicultural and global arenas.

Public Relations Defined. The definition of public relations then is somewhat modified. Presently the most agreed upon definition was established in a study by the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education, participants analyzed 472 unique definitions of public relations. The 65 public relations leaders offered the following definition of public relations:

> Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communications, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its public, involved the management of problems or issues, helps management to keep informed on and response to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools. (Harlow, 1976)

This definition of public relations, although acceptable to most professionals, suggests PR operates in terms of the organization but not fully in the sense of building a community. If a public relations professional views his or her work as helping a "public" gain over another "public" the emphasis on competition is reinforced. Thus someone has to

"lose" at the expense of someone "winning." The concept of cooperation is lost in this approach. Yet the view of many public relations professionals, especially from an account executives perspective, the PR professional is representing a client that is attached to a public. A more graphic emphasis was established in a recent article on the "PR Superstars" in Public Relations Quarterly. These superstars were described as the following:

> There's a new breed of PR people emerging. They earn over $1000,000 a year. The headhunters call them repeatedly. I call them the PR superstars. ....you can see the specific things the PR superstars are doing that others don't even try.... One difference is in objective. The tradition objective is to do these activities and do them well. The superstar's objective is not doing the duties but winning. Winning on Wall Street and winning in Washington. (Hass, 1990)

Demphasizing competition is key to the emergence of public relations from the participation model. As Stephen Covey emphasizes in describing cooperation in terms of "most situations are part of an interdependent reality, and then Win/Win is really the only viable alternative . . . ." This thinking behind the concept of cooperation being more important then competition further emphasizes the importance of moving away from an advocacy model or one-way flow model of communication most typlified by "publicity.". It is also to be noted that the newer responsibilities in public relations has moved the field out of primarily the advocacy or publicity model.

The 1990's--A Global Emphasis

Envisioning public relations at the helm of the Great Community is placing communication departments in command of future development efforts in public relations. Obviously the match of the discipline with the new responsibilities in public relations is not enough. Other factors need to be incorporated and recognized in the curriculum, especially with the growth of democracy throughout the world.

These sweeping political changes have changed the political face of the earth. Democracy is emerging at a rapid pace and in some cases unexpectedly. Glasnost in Russia and the end of the cold war set up new possibilities for communication. These political changes allowing more growth in democracy enables public relations to grow and spread.

As Fiur states: "If economics can be seen as the warp of world togetherness, then communication is the woof". (Fiur, 1998) Perhaps the single largest event to touch public relations has been the Economic Community of 1992, an economic consolidation that matches the U.S. in GNP and population and makes Europe the U.S.'s largest export market. This economic consolidation in Europe has spurred new growth in public relations both here and abroad. A national survey of key CEO's in public relations firms confirmed their leadership in the European Economic Community (Neff, 1990). However, how all these global developments translate into professional preparation, particularly in the communication departments across the United States, is yet to be determined. Presently only seven international courses were identified in the study reviewing college and university catalogs and none are located in communication departments

(Neff, 1989). Today's professionals in public relations will not survive without an international orientation in communication.

The 30 public relations CEO's interviewed in the EC survey ranked multicultural and international experience as the most important requirement for those going into public relations especially for those being hired to handle accounts dealing with the European Economic Community 1992. Fourteen mentioned international relations and culture as first, second, or third choice, the total mentioned ranked this area as the most important credential for EC-PR employment. Other frequent mentions included business experience, knowledge of public relations (too many people with just law or strictly business background entering into the PR professions' work), and knowledge of at least two languages.

This survey of top public relations CEO's of firms suggests that the training needs to be more interdisciplinary. Communication departments need to work with business departments, language departments, and certainly provide a curriculum that is internationally and multiculturally oriented. The traditional journalistic writing orientation was ranked well below the above characteristics but does remain as one small piece of a professional's preparation.

Once an international and multicultural curriculum is established with an interdisciplinary orientation, then the teaching of key concepts in public relations such as ethics and the use of communication approaches are radically modified. Whereas the areas of mass communication, public communication, and intra/interpersonal communication are taught as descrete entities, the factoring in of international and multicultural aspects changes the relationship between these three approaches to public relations. Represented in the graph below the areas are joined by the international and multicultural aspects to bring about a different perspective in public relations.

A Multicultural Communication Perspective. Teaching public relations with a multicultural-international orientation will modify a public relations approach to the use of communication. Whereas communication was often a la Western style, a cultural approach to public communication, interpersonal communication, and mass media will modify radically the viewpoints presented. For example:

The Japanese culture doesn't like direct confrontation during press conferences. This is seen as disrespectful. Direct confrontation in the Japanese culture takes place in interpersonal settings not during public communication events. Thus the American press can be considered very rude to pursue their usual tough questioning following a presentation by a Japanese company. A culturally astute public relations practitioner would arrange for the press to meet with the Japanese company officials quietly for the more direct questioning and alert the press to the cultural differences if a press conference format should be pursued.

In some countries the interpersonal network is the strongest means of communication, especially in third-world countries. The skills a public relations professional has in networking, group discussion, community meetings, etc. would be critical. Here a journalism approach is not as effective and in some cases this includes both print and broadcasting. In remote rural areas public communication (village meetings) and interpersonal networks are the strongest means for the public relations message to be heard.

Thus the cultural-international ways of doing things changes public relations. The sooner universities and schools focus on a multicultural approach to public relations, the sooner our practitioners will be able to relate to the complexities of public relations in a sensitive manner.

Ethics. The issue of ethics comes forth as a central issue in preparing public relations professionals. Yet not much time is spent focusing on this area according to the university and college catalogs. Here the topic of ethics is developed beyond the usual disagreements between the journalists and public relations professionals on ethical concerns. This approach is taken because the journalism orientation has little bearing on current public relations practice and the issue may be a moot point. Ethics considered in a multicultural environment brings forth concerns which have major impact on the practice of public relations.

A basic assumption in this discussion is that public relations will be developed in countries where there is a democratic form of government. Public relations does not work in countries where the people cannot be free to interact and speak. For example, a government controlled media (print or broadcasting) does not tolerate communication as a two-way flow. Teaching public relations in these situations could be irresponsible and dangerous to those involved. So the assumption in this discussion assumes a democratic form of governing (Heibert, 1989)

Thus the discussion focuses on public relations being developed in different cultures but cultures which espouse democracy. Yet the cultural differences abound and the differences are major.

For example, in Germany bribes are tax deductible. Of course, in America this is an incompatible concept with the American way of doing business. The list of ethical concerns in a survey of readers of the Harvard Business Review is quite extensive and covered (Baumhart, 1961; Breener and Molander, 1976):

1) gifts, gratuities, bribes, "call girls"
2) price discrimination, unfair pricing
3) dishonest advertising
4) miscellaneous unfair competitive practices
5) cheating customers, unfair credit practices, overselling
6) price collusion by competitors
7) dishonesty in making and keeping contracts
8) unfairness to employees, prejudice in hiring

In a 1985 survey of marketing managers, the respondents ranked their concerns (Chonko and Hunt, 1985):

1) bribery
2) fairness
3) honesty
4) price
5) product
6) personnel
7) confidentiality
8) advertising
9) manipulation of data
10) purchasing

On both lists bribery is the top problem and there are very different perceptions about bribery in different cultures. For this reason another name is given and bribery becomes "accommodation payments". Roth in her article on code of conduct makes a very careful analysis of these accommodation payments. Those ranging from $25 to $5000.00 are minor and are considered necessary to conduct business, Those ranging from $5000 to $100,000 are medium sized payments and fall into a gray area of ethical concern. Those payments ranging from $100,000 to millions of dollars are declared illegal by U.S. laws (Roth, 1987).

Some people say these "accommodation payments" are necessary to conduct business and are standard operating procedure in many parts of the world. In Saudia Arabia this is a means for distributing wealth and in Italy this keep the country from political chaos. African governmental leaders are in office a short time and view this as an opportunity to gain wealth and that practice plus the negative view toward multi-national corporations from the U.S. leads to many situations of extortion (Caron, 1982). In Japan favors must be repaid and cash is a permissible option. The United States is the only country which '"forbids with own companies to bribe a foreign official to get a sale." (Stewart, 1990) Caron recommends you play the game of the country you are in. It is seem as "morally justified because it is mandated by others' cultural norms" (p. 5).

Inevitably professionals in public relations are faced with the same dilemma. But the need to analyze these situations from a public relations viewpoint and not just a "business" orientation is sorely needed. Plus the entire issue of journalism ethics vs. public relations ethics seems even more remote especially since journalism ethics centers around the theme of "being objective"--a totally different perspective from business ethics.

Thus ethics in a multicultural perspective pulls in the complexities of public relations, a critical factor when training future public relations professionals. An even more critical factor when the increased presence of international contact is acknowledged. The multicultural issue will challenge the very basic precepts found in public relations today.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The tremendous political and economic changes have changed the face of the earth in dramatic ways. At this moment communication departments are ready to meet the newer demands being made on the public relations professional. Yet a number of key situations have to be changed or modified to bring the professional into line with the events of the time.

Curriculum. Communication departments need to review their curriculum for multicultural and international perspectives. Besides course development the interdisciplinary connections should be developed. Inviting language departments and business departments to coordinate efforts with the public relations curriculum should be a must in every school.

Two areas should be revised and revamped once the multicultural and international perspective are established. The entire issue of ethics should be dealt with in every course in terms of the multicultural and international perspective.

With the emerging new approach to public relations where the publicity model is lessened in favor of the participatory model, public relations students need to focus more on communication courses in discussion, small group decision making, networking, argumentation, etc.

The three communication areas should be reanalyzed in regard to cultures. How different cultures use mass media, interpersonal communication, and public communication should change the strategies of the public relations professional.

Internships in communication departments are well established. Internship experience with international and multicultural responsibilities should be required for each student.

Accreditation. Currently ACEJMC (Association of Council of Educations in Journalism and Mass Communication) has a journalistic model or the publicity model as the basis for national accreditation. The International Communication Task Force should continue to push for updating these credentials to a communication orientation with a multicultural and international perspective. Both COPA (Council on Postsecondary Accreditation) and DOE (the Department of Education) should either enforce the necessary changes in accreditation or honor a second accrediting group to assure that public relations professionals are given the best training available to meet the new level of problems that are confronting the professional.

Individual accreditation should be updated to include multicultural and international as the key aspect of attaining the Accreditation in Public Relations recognition. Both PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) and I.A.B.C. (International Association of Business Communicators) should have the multicultural and international umbrella over the public relations criteria.

Awards and Convention Papers. The standards for multicultural and international perspectives should be required for the presentation of papers at conventions and the research awards which are granted. Like most research previous to 1990 did not include communication departments which taught public relations or included public relations practitioners or

academics who came from the communication discipline, all standards need to be reviewed and changed. Perhaps all research prior to 1990 should be held in question because of the lack of subjects from communication departments and communication disciplines and the lack of international and multicultural standards in most cases.

Professional and academic organizations should have joint meeting and joint convention programs to assure that the multicultural mix is occurring. Communication organizations should meet with the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR), for example. This exchange should continue until the professional and academic professional organizations are clearly international and multiculturally oriented.

The United States is entering a period where international codes of conduct are becoming more effective. Updating the public relations codes of ethics on the national level and inviting all nations to abide by the international code of ethics is a critical step.

SUMMARY

Public relations has been redefined to fit the needs of an international and multicultural society. Moving from primarily a publicity model to a participatory or relational model, public relations is seen more as building a Great Community. The competitiveness is replaced by cooperativeness and public relations is not devoted to the representation of public.

The multicultural and international perspective inpacts the view of public relations in two major ways. The modes of communication are more integrated and dependent on a participatory model. The area of ethics becomes a very complex arena and suggest more need for developing thought in this area from a public relations perspective and not solely a business perspective.

Lastly, the official organizations who are involved in program and individual accrediting, awards and research efforts, and curriculum development should apply the international and multicultural yardstick to all efforts. A very different public relations professional would be trained if such a perspective was integrated into every accrediting and developmental effort.

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